1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

161 enumeration of the population. My process was to get together several
124 of the most intelligent and well-informed men in the district; cause them
to compare notes and then to tie a series of knots in strings as they are
[211] accustomed to do; different kinds of knots distinguishing the sexes. Each
house was counted separately, so that I obtained an exact census of the
whole country with the following results. This cord census is now in the
museum of the Smithsonian Institution, with many other articles, illus-
trating the life and customs of the people.

[162] The population of each district is as follows:

Tiribi	103
Uren	604
Bri-bri	172
Cabecar	128
The Valley	219
Total	1226

This covers all of the water-sheds of the Tilorio and Tiliri rivers ex-
cept two small bands; the Changinas on the Changina branch of the
Tilorio and a refugee remnant of the Cabecars on the extreme head of
the Tiliri. Probably an additional hundred would cover all of these.

On the North or Estrella river, and on the Chiripo, there are a few
more Cabecars who have little communication with the headquarters of
the tribe, but who are in the habit of going out to Limon or Matina for
what little trade they require. These are probably in all, not more than
200 or 300 in number. Nearly all speak Spanish and they are gradually
approximating to civilized or semi-civilized ways.

[461] The cause of the rapid decrease in the population is their extreme in-
146 dolence. With a country fitted to produce all the fruits of the tropics;
262 where maize grows luxuriantly, and where cattle and pigs increase with-
out care or labor; they are content to make plantains their staple, and
almost their only food. Chicha the form in which most of their maize
[273] is used, is a beverage very slightly intoxicating, if drank in large quanti-
ties, but the amount of nutriment derived from it is unimportant. Meat,
whether of domestic or wild animals, is a rarity and a luxury, and the
banana or plantain make up all deficiencies. The natural consequence
of a bulky and comparatively innutritious diet is a low physical state.
147 The system has little resisting power against disease, or healing power
164 over wounds. A slight attack of coast fever, which, with an ordinary
strong man of our own race, would be comparatively harmless, is very
apt to terminate fatally with these people. Indolent ulcers are so com-
mon that perhaps a full fourth of not only adults, but even children
have them, usually on the legs, originating in some slight scratch or
bruise; and very few of the elderly persons are without their scars.
These ulcers often last for years, and I have seen them as broad as the
165 two hands opened side by side. Although the local diseases are few, the
entire absence of medical treatment, the ignorance of the first principles

3:Stone E-5 (1945) 1949
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Boruca

GEOGRAPHY

131 THE country of the *Boruca* lies in the southeastern section of Costa Rica (see fig. 1, frontispiece) starting from the upper end of the flood plain of the Río Grande de Térraba, or, as we prefer to call it in the present paper, the Diquís River. *Diquís* is the older
103 appellation, and is the name most frequently used in Costa Rican geographies, being an Hispanic form of the *Boruca* words *dik*, meaning "water" and *krit* or *krjta*, meaning "large." It is from this also that the term *Río Grande* or "Large River" has evolved. The name *Térraba* is more recent, and is due to the one-
[101] time important community of *Térraba* Indians who were moved to the upper reaches of the Diquís River from the Talamanca region around 1700 by Fray Pablo de Rebullida.[1]

131 The land of the *Boruca* follows the river northward on both sides to a short distance above Curré. This territory includes the section of the Changuena River on the east, and most of the Cordillera Bruqueña, which is the Maritime Range, on the west and east.
162 Within this limited area, the *Boruca* have five
361 settlements. The largest of these is Boruca with forty-seven houses, and three hundred and thirty-four inhabitants, the majority of whom can be classed as Indian without *ladino* or white

[Text continues on top of page 3-B]

EARLY

101 What was included in the original territory
175 of the *Boruca*, we cannot say. The term, which we find spelled *Burucac*, appears to have been first used by Juan Vázquez de Coronado in a letter to the king, written in 1563.[2] He unfortunately does not delimit their location. It is obvious, however, that they formed a single unit or tribe. Throughout the early literature, allusion is made to the *Borucas* as *indios infieles y de guerra*,[3] who apparently fought with many of their neighbors as well as the Spaniards. Later during the Conquest, the term was applied to

[Text continues at bottom of p. 3-B]

[1] Fernández, 1907, tom. IX, p. 502; tom. III, p. 327, footnote 8. Peralta, 1938, p. 425 gives the date 1697 for the transferal of these people.

[2] Vázquez de Coronado, 1908, p. 37.

[3] See Fernández, 1907, vol. VIII, pp. 99, 462.

3:Stone E-5 (1945) 1949
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Boruca

GEOGRAPHY

mixture. The next largest community is Palmar Norte, on the western bank of the Diquis River, at the start of the flood plain. This has a population of one hundred and seventeen Indians, but, unfortunately, many *ladinos* are seeping in due to its proximity to the farms of the United Fruit Company and the Costa Rican town of Puerto Cortés (formerly "El Pozo"). There is one other large village of Indians, Curré, on the western bank of the Río Grande. This is the northernmost settlement of the *Boruca*, and has one hundred and three inhabitants, and fourteen houses. The other sites might well be called by the Spanish term *aldeas* or hamlets. Lagarto, also on the western bank of the river, has fifteen Indians and three houses. The rest of the tribe is scattered in locations which should be classed as *ladino* towns, such as Maíz, which was once all Indian, but now has only twenty-six Indians, Puerto Cortés which has fourteen, and Buenos Aires which has seven, some of whom are not pure. According to the census taken by the school teachers in Boruca, there are about twenty-five Indians who live isolated in the forest, many on the banks of the Changuena River, making a total of six hundred and forty-one *Boruca* Indians in 1945.

HISTORY

a province on the Pacific coast which apparently extended from the territory of the *Quepos* Indians to the River Chiriquí Viejo in Panamá.[4] Around the year 1608, or a little earlier, Fray Alonso de la Calle went alone to the *palenques* or fortified houses of the *Boruca*, and succeeded in converting and pacifying them. Fray Alonso appears to have gathered some of these Indians and formed a town.[5] Certain it is that by 1649, there was a town known as Boruca,[6] and by 1666, the term *Boruca* had ceased to be associated only with the people of that name, but included

[4] See Peralta, 1900, pp. 82, 218; Fernández, 1886, vol. V, p. 428.
[5] Fernández, 1907, vol. VIII, p. 99.
[6] Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, p. 364.

4:Pittier de Fabrega B-5 (ca. 1900) 1903
SA19 Talamanca SA19

THE JOURNAL OF

AMERICAN FOLK-LORE.

VOL. XVI.—JANUARY-MARCH, 1903.—No. LX.

FOLK-LORE OF THE BRIBRI AND BRUNKA INDIANS IN COSTA RICA.

THIS is, I believe, the first attempt to collect the tales and legends still preserved among the Costa Rican Indians. My primary object in compiling them was to obtain original texts for the study of the languages of the tribes mentioned, and a few of these texts, all belonging to the Bribri, have already been published in German, in the "Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien."[1]

As far as our very imperfect knowledge of the history of the aboriginal inhabitants of Costa Rica allows us to admit, the bulk of the population consisted at the time of the Spanish conquest of five or six main groups, differentiated essentially by their languages. The *Chorotegas*, in the peninsula of Nicoya, belonged to a northern stock, as did the small *Nahua* colonies scattered among them. The *Votos* or *Corobicies* occupied the low plains along the San Juan River and the northwestern end of the main cordillera; they are still represented to-day, at the headwaters of the Rio Frio Valley, by the ill-fated Guatos, whose complete disappearance is a question of only a few years. The *Huétaru*, *Huétares* or *Guetares* extended all over the central part of the country; they have become extinct, or are mixed up and lost among the present half-bred or Spanish population in the densely inhabited strip between Port Limon and Puntarenas; but far to the east, in the valleys which originate in the highest region of the cordillera, and descend towards the Caribbean Sea (Chirripó, Estrella, Tarire, Coen, Arári, Uren), there still live in an isolated state about 1500 of their descendants, divided into the two chief groups of the *Cabécares* (including the Chirripóes and other scattered families) and the *Vyceítas*, *Blancos*, or *Bribri*. The *Tirub*, *Térribes*, or *Térrabas* formed another stock, once powerful, but reduced to-day to a miserable handful located near the headwaters

[1] H. Pittier de Fábrega, *Die Sprache der Bribri Indianer in Costa Rica*, etc. 1898, vol. cxxxvii.

4:Pittier de Fabrega B-5 (ca. 1900) 1903
SA19 Talamanca SA19

of the Tararia, and to the small and somewhat intermixed colony of Térraba in the Diquis Valley, on the Pacific slope. On this latter side of the country and south of the Huétaru were the *Quepos* and the *Brunka* or *Cotos;* the first have now disappeared entirely, and may have belonged to the Huétaru stock. The Brunka still number from 300 to 400, and live together in the comparatively flourishing settlement of Boruca, near Térraba, in the Diquis Valley.

The Bribri have been the object of my special attention for some years past, and among them I have collected most of the legends and traditions I am now preparing for publication. Nos. 1–5 of the following tales belong to them. Nos. 6 and 7 have been obtained from the Brunka. Nos. 1–6 have their origin in the heathen past of our Indians, while the legend of Don Pedro Cascante belongs evidently to a period when the Christian influence had already made itself felt. Nos. 1–4 give us an idea as to what the primitive religion of our Costa Rican Indian was like: a supreme and almighty God, *Sibú*, surrounded by secondary divinities, *Sórkura*, *Jáburu*, etc., some of them good, others evil ones, and both eternally playing tricks upon each other. The notion of all men having been born from seeds like the plants is original and possibly new, as well as the continuous fighting of the genii, good and bad, for the possession of these seeds. No. 4 is especially interesting because of the rôle played by the skunk, that favorite and artful trickster of the North American Indian legends. Among the Bribri and Cabécara Indians, the skunk is also a prototype of cunning and subtlety, and he figures in several other tales which I have heard, but have not been able yet to record.

I. HOW JABURU ATE THE SEED[1] OF OUR KIN.

Surá, the good God, had gone to see his cornfield. While he was away, Jáburu, the evil One, came and ate the seed of our kin which the almighty Sibú had given Surá to take care of. When Surá returned home, Jáburu murdered him, and buried his corpse in a hole behind the house; on the grave he planted a cacao-tree and a calabash-tree.

Then Sibú, the almighty God, resolved also to kill Jáburu. Moving away, he went to Jáburu's house, and talked to him: "O Thou, uncle of mine, let us have our chocolate!" But Jáburu replied: "I

[1] According to the traditions of our Costa Rican Indians, every man or animal was originally born from a seed like that of a plant. The seeds of the several races of man were kept in baskets which were intrusted by Sibú to the keeping of the good deities. The evil ones, on the other hand, were constantly hunting for them, and this was the origin of continuous incidents, the relation of which has come down to the heathen Indians of to-day in the form of legends like the present one.

101 **Peoples:** *Names and Location.* Such complicated terminology with respect to geographical extensions leaves little hope for too clear a presentation of the inhabitants of this area. [635] The ancient provinces of Duy and Guaymí included the northwestern section of Panama which was in part the home of the Térraba Indians. These people will be treated only in connection with history and tradition in this study in spite of the fact that in historic times there was a small group on the Zorquín River.[22] In the actual report, we use the term Talamanca as an all-inclusive word for the Bribri and the Cabécares. There are between two and three thousand of these people on the Caribbean side, and approximately 1,595 on the Pacific. [162]

Panamanian Border to the Coen River. Many names are listed in the documents pertaining to the area from the Panamanian border to the Coen River in Costa Rica. Among these, the commonest are: Ara, Ateo, Abicetaba, Blancos, Biceitas or Viceitas, Korrhué, Ucabarúa, and Valientes. To be sure, most of these terms are spelled in various ways according to the period and the author. These peoples were found between the Urén, Lari, and Coen rivers and in the plain of the Tiliri or Sixaola River, at least as far as Punta Cahuita.[24]

This entire group seems to have been closely related although they were not all one original people.[24] Collectively, they were the first to be known as Talamancas in the early 17th century, and today are called by this name or by that of Bribri.[25] It is interesting to examine these ancient designations because certain ones are associated with peoples now extinct, while others have a definite inference in modern terminology.

The groups that have now disappeared are

[103] [22] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 218. This is also a Mosquitia name. The Bribri term is Choli.

[23] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 219. We do not include here the Sicuas or Zeguas who were also found on the north coast. They were known to be of Mexican extraction. For an account of these people *see* Lothrop, 1944.

[24] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, pp. 219–20.

[25] *See*, e.g., the reports of the Franciscan fathers toward the end of the 17th century. The distinction is clearly made between Térrabas, Cavécares (Cabécares), and Talamancas. *See* Fernández, 1886, vol. V, pp. 369–74.

[P. 8(A)]

101 361 [162] The two Bribri groups are to be found at Cabagra [43] and Salitre (*ẍerí*) and amount to approximately 895 people. Cabagra lies near the pass to the upper Lari beside a river bearing its name which is an important tributary of the Diquís. It is about four leagues from Potrero Grande. The exact date of the arrival [174] of Bribri here is not known although it was probably at the end of the 19th century as many of the older inhabitants were born on the Lari and Urén rivers. One tradition holds 173 that certain families fled across the Talamanca 166 Range because they had not adhered to clan [614] regulations in marriage. It is perhaps of significance that very few clans form the groups in both places, and that as people, they are the first to divert from ancient tribal customs. Another popular belief is that Berchi, a king of Talamanca, caused numerous people to flee because of his extreme cruelty (*see* Folklore: *Recent History*). Some inhabitants of Cabagra moved westward to Salitre. Gradually, both places have grown as a result of the arrival of other families from the northeast as well as an increased birth rate.

At the end of the pass from the upper Coen is Ujarrás of the Cabécares which was settled for a similar reason at the same general time. [582] It is said that "the King of Talamanca prohibited marriage between brothers [44] and one couple who had disobeyed the rules fled and went to Ujarrás." Others followed to the ex-

[Text continues Top of P. 8(B)--Gualys]

LANGUAGE

197 **Connections and Previous Studies.** The majority of linguists connect both the Bribri and the Cabécar tongues with Chibcha.[45] However, they are sufficiently removed from one another that they are not mutually interchangeable. The intellectually more advanced, but at [191] the same time conquered, Cabécares generally understand and speak Bribri with exception of

[Text continues bottom of P. 8(B)]--Gualys]

[103] [44] This name has no meaning in any existing tongue. The site should not be confused with N.S. de la Luz [147] de Cabagra which was founded in 1745 by the Franciscan fathers and settled with Térraba Indians two leagues from San Francisco de Térraba. Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, p. 504.

[44] It should be remembered that these people are organized on the basis of matrilineal clans. (*See* Social

173 tent that this small valley could not support
166 the inhabitants. Some left for the site of China Kichá and there were joined by more people from Talamanca. We estimate that there are
[162] about 700 Indians within the area of Ujarrás and China Kichá.

101 **Other Sites.** There is a relatively strong per-
144 centage of Talamancan blood remaining in the people of the Reventazón Valley, but there are none of the Talamancan living habits left. Here at Orosi, and farther north at Cachí and Tucurrique, are descendents of the Cabécares
648 from the Coen region. Tres Rios, in the Central
167 Plateau, was originally settled by Bribri and
101 Cabécar Indians brought there by the colonial government in 1747.[45] Similarly, at Cangel in Guanacaste, there are some few Bribri relationships.[46] The presence of this blood in these
[669] areas is due to the transferral of many Talamancans by the government of Costa Rica as penalty for four uprisings, the first three between 1610 and 1619 and the last in 1709,
[799] which resulted in the destruction of the Fran-
[177] ciscan missions and the massacre of Spanish men and women.[47] In these sections of displaced peoples, acculturation has been triumphant and there is next to nothing to suggest the aboriginal connections of the inhabitants of these places beyond the ordinary characteristics of the mestizo.

LANGUAGE

197 the Chirripó who are not neighbors and have
[191] little or no contact with Bribri. Few Bribri, however, do the same with Cabécar. In this respect, nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the vocabulary used by the Bribri when dealing with sacred subjects, prayers, or myths
[533] is almost totally Cabécar. Ancient songs, on
[784] the other hand, are often sung by the Bribri

Organization.)

[45] Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, pp. 491–92.

[46] Fernández, 1889, pp. 379–80.

[47] Fernández, 1883, vol. III, pp. 325–26, ftn. 7; 1886, vol. V, pp. 162–215.

[48] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, pp. 178–356; Mason, 1940, pp. 76–77.